



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 9 January 2026

by **R Gravett BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 January 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/U4230/H/25/3375781

Footpath outside 174 Monton Road, Eccles, Manchester M30 9GA

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Verity Cheyne of BT Group Plc against the decision of Salford City Council.
 - The application Ref is PA/2025/1175.
 - The development proposed is installation of 1No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/U4230/W/25/3375783

Footpath outside 174 Monton Road, Eccles, Manchester M30 9GA

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Verity Cheyne of BT Group Plc against the decision of Salford City Council.
 - The application Ref is PA/2025/1206.
 - The advertisement proposed is installation of 1No. BT Street Hub Unit and associated advertisement panels on either side of the unit.
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Decision

1. Appeal A and Appeal B are dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Appeal A relates to the refusal of planning permission for the proposed communications hub ('the Street Hub'). Appeal B relates to the refusal of advertisement consent for the two digital illuminated advertisement screens which would be an integral part of the hub proposed in Appeal A. I have combined the appeals into a single decision letter as they are intrinsically linked and raise similar issues, however I have considered each on its individual merits.
3. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 stipulate that control may be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety. Therefore, whilst I have taken into account the development plan policies referred to by the Council, they have not been determinative in respect of Appeal B.
4. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published for consultation during the course of this appeal. Having regard to its content and the nature of the disputed matters, I am satisfied that no prejudice would arise to either party by proceeding to issue this decision without seeking comments.

Main Issues

5. The main issue in respect of Appeal A is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, and on pedestrian safety.
6. In respect of Appeal B, the main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisements on visual amenity, and on public safety, with particular regards to pedestrians.

Reasons

Character, appearance and visual amenity

7. The appeal site comprises a section of pavement on the northern side of Monton Road which is a busy street, predominantly commercial in character comprising rows of typically two-storey buildings with ground floor town centre uses.
8. The submitted plans show the existing street furniture closest to the site, which consists of a streetlamp, bin and bench. Whilst on site, I observed that the wider section of pavement also includes two further benches, a cycle stand, as well as tables and chairs and freestanding A-board signs associated with the café on the corner of Monton Road and Partington Street. This existing proliferation of street furniture results in a relatively cluttered pedestrian environment.
9. The proposed Street Hub would be freestanding, set around 2m from the nearest shopfronts to avoid obstructing entrances, and would be broadly aligned with the nearest bench and streetlamp. Although of modern design, it would be of substantial height and notable width, resulting in a boxlike structure. Its size and siting would add to the proliferation or clutter of street furniture on this section of the pavement. Moreover, its height of just under 3m, width, form and orientation would lead to it appearing as an imposing and prominent feature when travelling in either direction along Monton Road, very conspicuous compared to the smaller scale of most other street furniture. Although the brightness of the screen could be controlled, the illuminated advertisements on either side of the Street Hub would exacerbate this prominence resulting in a visually incongruous and strident feature in the streetscene.
10. The commercial character of the area means that advertisements and illuminated signage are not uncommon. However, I observed these to be generally fixed to the buildings, typically modest in scale and associated with the ground floor town centre uses, including fascia and projecting signs. The A-board signs sited along the pavement in front of the shops were much smaller and less prominent than the appeal proposal. Even if carefully controlled, the display of several static images over time would draw further attention to the Street Hub and would be viewed in stark contrast to the existing typically static advertisements and signage.
11. The appellant has referred to a double-sided advertising display on the bus shelter on the opposite side of Monton Road, which they assert displays a similar form of development. However, this bus shelter is located on a different section of the pavement, and I did not find its location to be as cluttered as the pavement where the proposed Street Hub would be located. Nor do I find the strident and obtrusive visual impact of the freestanding appeal proposal to be comparable to the visual impact of displays integrated within bus shelters.
12. Therefore, I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character, appearance and visual amenity of the area. Although not determinative in respect

of Appeal B, the proposal would conflict with policies DG1, D1, D3 and D4 of the Salford Local Plan: Development Management Policies and Designations (2003) (LP). Together, these require development to be of high-quality design and of a scale and height which does not unduly dominate the townscape, avoids or limits street clutter or visual obstacles and minimises the impact on visual amenity, and the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Pedestrian and public safety

13. The width and siting of the proposed Street Hub would leave around 2m of usable pavement up to the shopfronts and only around 1.46m to the edge of the kerb with Monton Road. I note that the Council's Highways Officer was satisfied that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on highway safety, subject to controlling the luminance and display frequency of the advertisement screens. However, while it may meet minimum width guidelines, the Street Hub would noticeably reduce the effective clear width and free flow of pedestrian movement along this busy section of the pavement.
14. It would result in a pinch-point which would make the pavement difficult to navigate, particularly for pedestrians with prams, small children, wheelchair users, or those with visually or cognitively impaired mobility. There is also a risk that pedestrians would step onto the carriageway to avoid the pinch-point or, given the proliferation of street furniture, cross Monton Road at this point. This would be to the detriment of the safety of pedestrians. Although a benefit of the proposal, indirect streetlighting from the proposed illuminated advertisement screens would not sufficiently mitigate such harm.
15. I therefore conclude that the proposal would have a harmful effect on pedestrian safety and public safety, with particular regards to pedestrians. It would conflict with LP policies DG1, D1, D3 and D4 insofar as they require all development to be easy and safe to move around and not have a detrimental effect on the movement of pedestrians, avoiding unnecessary physical obstructions.

Other Matters

16. I have had regard to the appeal decisions referred to in the appellant's evidence¹. However, these examples appear to be in locations some distance from the appeal site, such as Barnet, Edgware and Kingston-upon-Thames. Matters relating to the effect of a proposal upon the character and appearance of an area, are site specific matters of planning judgement. While they may be in commercial or town centre areas, it has not been shown that the circumstances of these cases are wholly comparable to the case which is now before me. Accordingly, the cited decisions do not lead me to reach a different conclusion on the main issues.
17. I understand that the appeal proposal followed discussion and collaborative engagement with the Council which was considered to result in an agreed location for the Street Hub. I appreciate the appellant's frustration that Members of the Planning & Transportation Regulatory Panel subsequently formed a different view to officers. However, it was open to Members to do so, and I have no substantive evidence before me that insufficient consideration was given to the officers delegated report, which clearly set out the public benefits which weighed in favour

¹ APP/N5090/Z/22/3296138, APP/N5090/Z/21/3287033, APP/Z5630/H/3209488

of the proposal. Therefore, these matters have not had a bearing on this appeal, which I have considered solely on its planning merits.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

18. I have had due regard to the benefits of the proposal. In respect of Appeal A, paragraph 119 of the Framework states that an advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. The Framework also supports the expansion of electronic communication networks. The Street Hub would therefore support the Government's aim of improving digital infrastructure.
19. The proposal would contribute to a comprehensive network of connectivity in the area and to meeting demand for digital connectivity and services, such as ultra-fast public Wi-Fi, free phone calls, 5G mobile connectivity and access to community and emergency awareness messaging. Further, the Street Hub would offer the community, the Council and local business groups access to local digital advertising space. It has been designed to avoid anti-social behaviour, would have controllable volume levels and environmental sensors and would be powered by renewable carbon-free energy.
20. Nevertheless, when taken together, the above-mentioned benefits do not outweigh the harm that I have identified above to the character and appearance of the area and to pedestrian safety.
21. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area, and on pedestrian safety. Appeal A therefore conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole and there are no material considerations, including the Framework, to suggest the decision should be made other than in accordance with it. Appeal B would cause harm to visual amenity and public safety.
22. For these reasons, I conclude that both Appeal A and Appeal B should be dismissed.

R Gravett

INSPECTOR